

# Death By Love By Gerry Breshears PDF

Gerry Breshears



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# About the book

Title: Death By Love - An Insightful Journey

Authors: Gerry Breshears and Mark Driscoll

"Death By Love" delves deep into the transformative impact of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross, presenting a heartfelt narrative tailored to the genuine struggles faced by individuals today. The book artfully combines touching personal messages and profound theological reflections, revealing that the crucifixion is much more than a historical episode. It serves as a beacon of hope, healing, and redemption, especially during life's most trying moments.

This work is not only compassionate but also serves as a hands-on guide for readers eager to grasp the extensive and life-changing effects of Christ's atonement. It invites individuals to engage with their personal burdens, offering the assurance of divine love and grace as a source of strength in their journeys.

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# About the author

Profile: Gerry Breshears

Name: Gerry Breshears

Profession: Theologian and Professor

Institution: Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon

## Overview:

Gerry Breshears is a distinguished figure in Christian theology, celebrated for his significant contributions over an extensive career. As a professor at Western Seminary, he has imparted wisdom to numerous students, highlighting his profound comprehension of biblical texts.

## Key Attributes:

- **Academic Excellence:** Breshears is recognized for his rigorous academic approach.
- **Pastoral Insight:** He possesses a compassionate pastoral heart, adept at connecting complex theological ideas with everyday Christian practices.

## Notable Work:

- **"Death by Love":** A collaborative project that examines the transformative impact of Jesus' crucifixion.

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## Impact:

His commitment to teaching, writing, and pastoral care has established him as a respected voice within modern evangelical communities, influencing both students and fellow theologians alike.

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# Death By Love By Gerry Breshears Summary

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# Death By Love By Gerry Breshears Summary

## Chapter List

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# 1. Understanding the Concept of Divine Love in Christianity

In Christianity, the concept of divine love is a core tenet that shapes the way believers understand God, humanity, and the relationship between the two. This divine love, often referred to as 'agape' in Greek, transcends human understanding and is characterized by unconditionality, selflessness, and an everlasting commitment to the well-being of others. Understanding this profound aspect of God's nature not only deepens the faith of believers but also informs how they interact with the world around them, particularly in times of suffering and hardship.

At its essence, divine love is about an intentional choice to pursue the good of others without expectation of reciprocation. This mirrors the love that God has for humanity, exemplified in the Christian belief that God loves every individual unconditionally. A powerful reflection of this concept is found in the teachings of Jesus, who emphasized love as the greatest commandment, urging his followers to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and to love their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:37-40). This dual command captures the spirit of divine love—first directed towards God, and then extending to others, creating a cycle of love that reflects God's relationship with humanity.

The Apostle Paul, in his letters, provides further insights into the nature of



divine love, especially in 1 Corinthians 13, where he describes love as patient, kind, and devoid of arrogance or self-interest. This canonical text has been foundational in Christian thought, emphasizing that true love reflects God's own character. Consider how this teaches Christians to engage with one another, particularly in communities where conflicts arise. Instead of seizing on personal grievances, believers are called to forgive and seek reconciliation, illustrating their understanding of divine love as a healing force in a fractured world.

A poignant example of divine love in action can be seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Here, a wayward son squanders his inheritance on reckless living but is met with open arms by his father upon his return. The father's reaction exemplifies divine love—full of grace, mercy, and a willingness to forgive without condition. This story resonates with many who have felt lost or estranged, offering a powerful visualization of the relentless pursuit of love that characterizes God's relationship with humanity. It calls believers to reflect this same love in their own lives—reaching out to those who are marginalized or lost, just as the father did.

Moreover, divine love is not merely a theological concept but has practical implications. It compels believers to engage in acts of service and sacrifice for others. Christianity teaches that human love, while valuable, is often

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flawed and limited. In contrast, divine love offers a perfect model to emulate. When believers commit acts of kindness—through charity, community service, or personal sacrifice—they mirror the divine love that they have received from God. For instance, during crises such as natural disasters, Christian communities often mobilize to provide relief and support, driven by their understanding of love as a transformative agent that not only meets immediate needs but also restores hope.

Thus, understanding the concept of divine love in Christianity is a profound endeavor that impacts both personal faith and community actions. It encourages believers to embody the principles of love taught by Jesus, fostering a culture of compassion and understanding amidst the complexities of human relationships. As Christians strive to understand and implement divine love, they find themselves not only transformed but also equipped to reflect the heart of God in a world deeply in need of healing and redemption.

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## 2. Exploring the Depths of Human Suffering and Redemption

In Gerry Breshears' "Death By Love," the themes of human suffering and the potential for redemption are intricately explored, revealing how deeply intertwined these concepts are within the framework of Christian theology. Breshears posits that suffering, while often seen as a burden, can also serve as a profound catalyst for spiritual awakening and transformation.

Human suffering is an inescapable part of the human experience. From the loss of loved ones to personal failures and chronic pain, every individual encounters hardship at some point in their lives. These experiences can lead to feelings of despair, questioning the very foundations of faith and love. Breshears underscores that suffering is not arbitrary; it is often a result of living in a fallen world marred by sin and separation from God. This perspective aligns with the Christian understanding of the world as inherently flawed, where both individual and collective suffering manifest.

The book delves into biblical narratives that illustrate suffering's complexity and its role in the human experience. One poignant example is the story of Job, who endured immense suffering yet maintained his faith in God through his trials. Job's story exemplifies a journey through pain towards understanding and redemption. As readers walk through Job's anguish, they witness the elevation of human suffering into a transformative experience

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that ultimately leads to divine restoration. Breshears emphasizes that like Job, people are invited to navigate their suffering with honesty, reflecting on how such experiences can result in a deeper understanding of God's love and compassion.

In conjunction with suffering, Breshears highlights the concept of redemption, which is portrayed as an integral part of the Christian faith. Redemption in Christianity refers to the act of being saved from sin and its consequences, a process that demonstrates God's overarching love and mercy. The author connects the dots between personal affliction and the larger narrative of redemption seen throughout the Bible. For instance, the story of Lazarus showcases that after death, there is the promise of new life—a central tenet of Christian belief. The sick and dying can find solace in knowing that suffering has a purpose and culminates in resurrection and renewal.

Moreover, the narrative of the Prodigal Son serves as a powerful allegory for redemption from the depths of despair. The son's journey into a life of recklessness and subsequent return to the father highlights that no matter how far one strays, redemption is always within reach. This parable reassures believers that spiritual estrangement does not equate to permanent severance from divine love. Breshears articulates that the process of returning from despair often ignites a new understanding and appreciation

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for the grace that covers human flaws.

Importantly, Breshears addresses the interplay between suffering and the communal aspects of faith. In many cases, individuals do not experience suffering in isolation; rather, they are supported or battered by community dynamics. This brings forth the vital role that fellowship and shared faith can play in healing and redemption. Accountable relationships within the church community allow individuals to process their pain collectively, emphasizing that vulnerability can lead to richer connections and mutual support.

Ultimately, Breshears encourages readers to reconsider their own suffering through a theologically rich lens. He invites reflection on how these experiences can deepen one's relationship with God, suggesting that struggles can refine faith and cultivate empathy towards others. The emphasis on Christ's suffering on the cross—as the ultimate sacrifice for humanity—reinforces that divine love meets human suffering in its most profound expression.

In conclusion, "Death By Love" offers a robust exploration of the depths of human suffering and the promise of redemption, guiding readers to perceive their struggles not as dead ends but rather as pathways that can lead to a more profound embrace of divine love. Through this journey, individuals can align their narratives with the hope and healing that Christ's love

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embodies, emerging with renewed strength and a deeper connection to their faith.

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### 3. The Role of Jesus' Sacrifice in Our Lives

In Gerry Breshears' "Death By Love," the critical role of Jesus' sacrifice is placed at the center of Christian faith, illuminating how it profoundly shapes the lives of believers. At its core, the sacrifice of Jesus is not merely an act of historical significance, but rather the quintessential expression of divine love determining the trajectory of a Christian's spiritual journey. This sacrificial love offers redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation between God and humanity, elements that are foundational to the Christian experience.

Breshears elucidates that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross serves as a pivotal moment in the narrative of salvation history. The event transcends time, impacting not only the individuals present at the crucifixion but extending to all humanity across ages. His death embodies the ultimate act of love, showcasing a willingness to bear the weight of sin and suffering for the sake of others. This illustrates not only a deep divine love but also emphasizes the seriousness of human sin and estrangement from God.

In practical terms, the implications of Jesus' sacrifice are manifold. Upon accepting this sacrificial love, individuals are offered forgiveness for their sins, a central tenet in Christian belief. Breshears emphasizes that true forgiveness, as experienced through Jesus' sacrifice, is offered freely and radically. It challenges believers to extend that same grace to others,



evolving into a transformative power in their relationships and their communities. This divine forgiveness prompts a reflection on the nature of love; it is unconditional and selfless, inviting disciples to adopt similar attitudes in their lives.

Moreover, the sacrificial love of Jesus instills a sense of identity and belonging among believers. Through His death and resurrection, individuals are invited into a new relationship with God, characterized by intimacy and acceptance. This creates a profound sense of purpose grounded in love and service. For instance, many Christians find themselves compelled by the love of Christ to engage in social justice, charity work, and community service, reflecting the ethical implications of being called to love others as Christ loved them. These acts of service become a living testimony to the world about the transformative power of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Breshears also discusses the emotional ramifications of Jesus' sacrifice on human suffering. Recognizing that Jesus experienced profound pain and abandonment during His crucifixion offers comfort to believers facing their own trials. His willingness to embrace suffering without losing sight of His mission provides a blueprint for navigating personal disasters and loss. For example, individuals who endure grief from the loss of loved ones may find solace in knowing that Christ understands suffering intimately and offers hope for future restoration.

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Ultimately, the role of Jesus' sacrifice is not confined to the past; it carries ongoing relevance for believers today. It beckons them to respond in love—love that is active, sacrificial, and community-oriented. The call to emulate this love can be seen in various acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation in daily life. In the face of conflict and division, believers are encouraged to draw on the resources of Christ's sacrifice to bridge gaps and heal wounds.

In conclusion, the role of Jesus' sacrifice in our lives extends beyond theological doctrine; it fundamentally alters how believers experience love, forgiveness, and purpose. It challenges them to reflect on how they embody these principles in a world rife with pain and alienation. From this profound understanding stems the potential to practically live out the Christian faith in a manner that is deeply compassionate and transformational, echoing the sacrificial love that defines the essence of Jesus' mission.

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## 4. Practical Applications of Love in a Broken World

In a world often overshadowed by pain, conflict, and division, the concept of love, particularly divine love as expressed in Christianity, offers profound practical applications that can transform lives and communities.

Understanding how to enact love within a broken world involves implementing actions rooted in compassion, empathy, and the teachings of Jesus. This section explores how individuals and communities can apply love practically, serving as agents of change and as sustainers of hope in the face of adversity.

Firstly, love manifests through acts of service. In situations where communities face challenges such as poverty, homelessness, or natural disasters, practical love translates into serving those in need. For instance, churches and faith-based organizations often mobilize to provide food banks, shelters, and outreach programs. These acts of service not only meet immediate needs but also embody the essence of Christ's teachings, promoting the idea that serving others is akin to serving God. A notable case is the response of various Christian organizations during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005; countless volunteers provided food, shelter, and emotional support to those affected, showcasing love through action and compassion in a time of crisis.



Moreover, fostering relationships of forgiveness and reconciliation is another essential application of love in a fractured world. Many individuals hold onto grudges and resentments that prevent healing and strong community bonds. The Christian doctrine emphasizes forgiveness, as seen in the Lord's Prayer, where believers ask for their debts to be forgiven as they forgive others. Practical scenarios, such as community-led reconciliation initiatives, demonstrate this principle in action. A significant example is the post-apartheid reconciliation efforts in South Africa, particularly through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where perpetrators and victims came together in a process that emphasized understanding and healing rather than retribution. Such efforts illustrate how love can bridge divides and promote peace among adversaries.

Creating inclusive spaces where everyone is valued and supported also exemplifies practical love. This application is particularly important in addressing social injustices related to race, gender, and economic disparity. For instance, churches and religious organizations can lead by example, promoting diversity and inclusion in their congregations. A practical application can be seen in how some congregations actively work to welcome LGBTQ+ members, emphasizing love and acceptance rather than judgment. By fostering environments where individuals are celebrated for their unique identities, such communities reflect the heart of God's love, embracing people from all walks of life.

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Furthermore, love involves advocating for justice on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed. Engaging in social advocacy and supporting systemic change is a vital expression of love that seeks to address the root causes of suffering in the world. For example, the work of organizations like International Justice Mission, which fights against human trafficking and slavery, illustrates a structured approach to love that seeks to restore dignity and freedom to individuals in dire situations. By raising awareness and taking concerted action against injustices, individuals and groups embody the love of Christ in their mission to rectify wrongs and uplift the oppressed.

Additionally, love is shown through the practice of empathy. This involves not just sympathizing with others but understanding their experiences and feelings deeply. In a broken world, where everyone carries burdens of some kind, practicing empathy can foster meaningful connections and support networks. For example, mental health awareness campaigns often emphasize the importance of listening and being present for those who are struggling, reflecting the compassionate nature of love. By encouraging open dialogues about mental health within faith communities, churches become places where people can feel safe to share their burdens, promoting healing through relational love.

In summary, the practical applications of love in a broken world call for

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active, intentional actions steeped in compassion, forgiveness, inclusion, advocacy, and empathy. Each of these applications not only aligns with the call of Christianity to love one's neighbor but also serves to heal the wounds of society, offering a glimpse of the divine love that Christians believe can mend even the most broken of hearts. Through these actions, believers can truly live out the message of Christ, becoming beacons of hope amid adversity and reflecting the unconditional love that transforms both individuals and communities.

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## 5. The Hope and Future Promised by God's Love

The Promise of Hope through God's Love is a central theme in "Death By Love," as it elucidates the transformative power that divine love holds in our lives and the world around us. This aspect of the book appeals to believers and seekers alike, promising not just a fleeting sense of goodwill, but an eternal, profound assurance that shapes both the present and the future.

At the heart of this promise lies the unwavering conviction that God's love transcends temporary suffering and extends into everlasting joy and purpose. The book beautifully illustrates how this divine love serves as a beacon during life's darkest moments. For instance, consider the story of a parent grappling with the loss of a child. The depth of grief in such situations can feel insurmountable, often leading individuals to question their faith and the very existence of love. However, in the context of God's love, there is a narrative of hope that demonstrates how His presence can lead to a form of resurrection—an ability to find meaning and redemption even in immense sorrow.

Moreover, Breshears emphasizes that the hope promised by God's love is rooted in the historical and theological significance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Through the resurrection, believers are assured that death is not the end but rather a transition into a more profound existence. This promise

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encourages individuals to navigate their lives with confidence in the ultimate victory of love over despair. It becomes a source of motivation to face adversities with a spirit of resilience, as they hold onto the belief that there is a divine plan in motion.

In practical terms, the love of God calls Christians to engage actively in their communities, offering support to those in need. The way that love manifests in acts of kindness, mercy, and grace can significantly alter the narrative of suffering in the world. For instance, consider a community that rallies together to support families affected by natural disasters. The collective love shown through shelter, food, and emotional support serves not only to alleviate immediate physical needs but also to foster hope in the hearts of those who feel abandoned by their situation.

Breshears illustrates that hope is not merely passive; it is dynamic, encouraging believers to participate in God's redemptive work on Earth. Consequently, understanding that we are recipients of unconditional love empowers individuals to extend that love to others, creating a ripple effect that transforms personal suffering into collective healing.

As the book progresses, it becomes clear that the hope offered by God's love is deeply intertwined with faith. Trusting in God's promises enables believers to look forward to a future that is brighter, rooted in the knowledge

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that God's love will ultimately restore what has been broken. This anticipation fosters a sense of peace and purpose, compelling individuals to contribute positively to their surroundings, regardless of their current struggles.

In conclusion, "Death By Love" paints a compelling picture of hope anchored in God's enduring love. By embracing this powerful promise, individuals can find strength amid adversity, knowing that their experiences serve as contributions to a larger narrative of redemption. This assurance not only enhances personal faith but also inspires communal efforts to cultivate a world reflective of divine love, offering a glimpse into the kingdom of God that believers hold dear.

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